

## Library Focus Groups – Summary Report

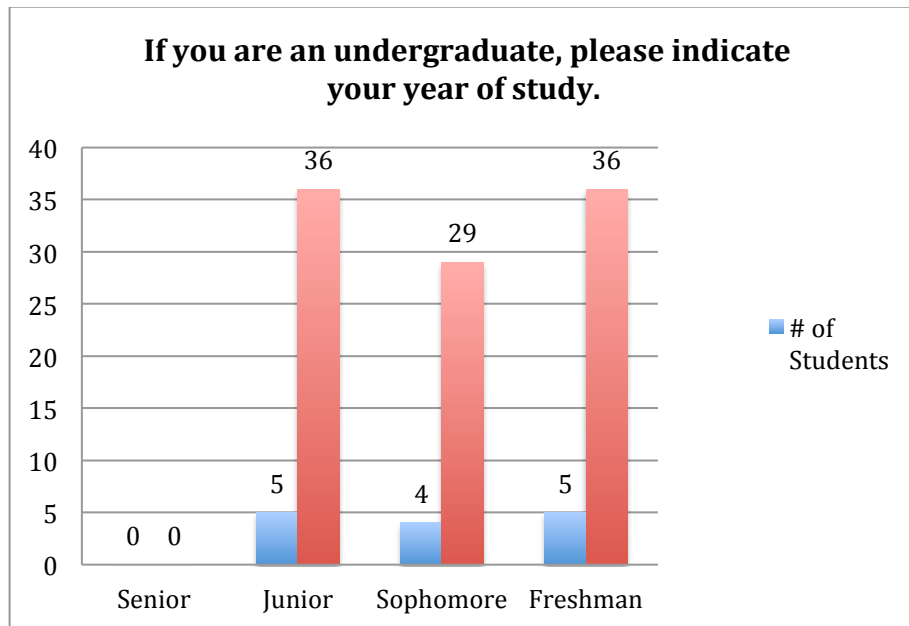
Results spring 2014 (15 April 2014)

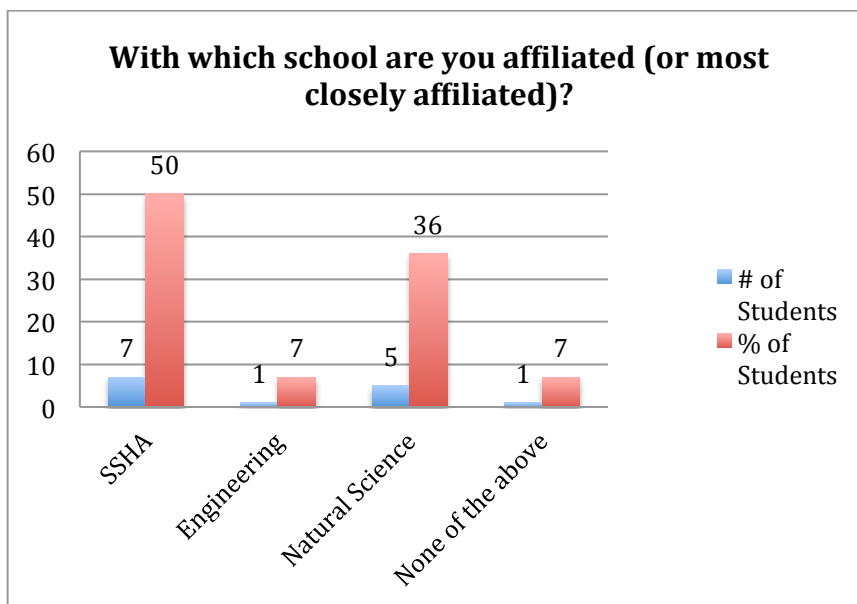
Total Number of Participants: 14 students

In spring 2014, those conducting library instruction sessions asked students via an exit slip to indicate if they had any interest in being contacted to participate in a library focus group. Interested students were then contacted in early April to solicit their participation in one of two focus groups. Of approximately 450 email invitations sent to this initial pool of students, 19 responded and 14 attended the sessions (seven in each group) on Tuesday, April 15.

Of these participants, most were juniors (36%) and freshmen (36%) followed by sophomores (29%). The group did not include any seniors. This is not surprising since a large number of our invites went to Writing 10 students whom we suspect were primarily freshmen or sophomores. Participants had received a minimum of one library instruction session, and the majority of the participants were female (86%). We recognize that this is not a random sample. Students came with some knowledge of the library due to their exposure to library instruction.

Most of the students were affiliated with SSHA (50%), followed by Natural Sciences (36%) with one individual from Engineering (7%), and another individual not indicating any affiliation.





## Collections

### Findings:

- Students are impressed by our collections and reported using a variety of databases/search tools.
- Other services closely connected to collections are considered important. These services include the VPN, UC-eLinks, and Interlibrary Loan.
- The frequency of use of our collections varies greatly and is primarily determined by the each student's academic requirements.
- Students are also using the library's collections for activities outside of strictly course research including undergraduate research and personal research. At times, the students are using the collection in place of purchasing texts.
- Eighty-six percent (12/14) participants were either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the library's resources.
- The VPN does not always work on tablet devices. This was viewed as a hurdle to accessing collections.



**Actions:**

- Continue to collect resources for undergraduates in areas related to course and major offerings.
- Report to campus IT one student’s inability to install the VPN on a tablet (Windows RT 8.1).

**Communications**

**Findings:**

- Students learn about the library space, services and resources in a variety of ways. Some of the primary venues through which they learn include CROPS, the Services Desk, library instruction sessions, and the iPod Touch Library Tour.
- Students also hear about the library through faculty and Happenings announcements though thoughts about Happenings announcements were clearly mixed. Many students found Happenings announcement irrelevant.
- Students did not recall learning about the library through Welcome Week, Facebook, or digital signage.
- Students have an awareness of digital signage but are seeing more Students First Content than library content.
- Students spoke about too much information on the digital signage with signs changing too quickly.
- Students valued exhibit content on the digital displays.
- Students view digital signage while seated though their comments regarding content suggested that they also saw digital signage while walking.
- Students believe incoming students need to know the following about the library: how to use databases, available resources including print books, VPN access, how to print/scan,

Interlibrary Loan services, the iPod Touch Library Tour, and the need to arrive early to find a seat.

- Students still use email but that email has to be distinctive to avoid being deleted.
- Students visit the website for very practical information (maps, room reservations, event information, library resources).

#### **Actions:**

- Consider reducing digital signage content and extending (revisiting) the time allotted for each slide.
- Consider if email is a communication channel worth leveraging for undergraduate students.
- Monitor the campus direction for a new course management system. Leverage library information and resources in a CMS like Canvas. Continue to have a library presence in UCMCROPS.
- Confirm important messaging for freshmen to include information about the VPN, ILL, resources (online and print), and the iPod Touch Library tour.
- Consider how to make library resources, maps etc. easily accessible for students on the new library website.
- Continue to leverage digital signage for Exhibits.
- Continue to make faculty aware of library services since they may share this information with students.
- Continue to produce the iPod Touch tour, offer library instruction sessions, and offer quality assistance at our service points.

#### **Space**

- The library is a well-used space and more space is needed for students. Sometimes they cannot find a place to sit. Student perceived busy times falling from noon to 4pm and more generally from midterms forward.
- Students want the library to have both silent and collaborative study areas; however, silent study areas are the ones hardest to come by.
- The library is generally too loud with open areas on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor being loudest. The noise factor was the one most likely to prevent students from using the library.
- Students desire soundproofed room. Noise, both internal and external e.g. from Scholars Lane) is audible in the collaborative workrooms. The noise is distracting.
- Students have a number of favorite areas in the library (3<sup>rd</sup> floor facing Lake Yosemite, bridge above the KL 255 printers, pod spaces with whiteboards) and would like more of all of these spaces.
- Wi-Fi in the library is poor and possibly the worst of any building on campus.
- Students like carrels for privacy (even taller carrels) and may not take an open space at a crowded table.
- Less crowded space would be more conducive to encourage studying in the library.
- Other areas on campus are tapped for silent study (e.g. 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of COB, computer labs in SSM, Half Dome study room) when the library cannot provide this.

- Student like close proximity of library-like spaces.

#### **Actions:**

- Create more quiet space. Advocate for reclaiming space in the Kolligian Library e.g. 2<sup>nd</sup> floor west for student study spaces.
- Take a creative look at changing the library culture to reduce noise.
- Advocate for 24/7 study space in KL 155.
- Consider looking at other campus spaces being used for study purposes. These spaces may generate ideas for future library spaces.

### **Services**

#### Printing

- For some student, printing is unreliable and has a few kinks.
- Students believe more printers are needed for peak times.

#### Customer Service

- Students have had many positive interactions at the Services Desk though some students reported that they felt the service point was uninviting.
- Referrals and helpfulness varied depending on the individual staffing.
- Students expected their peers to be more active in offering assistance.
- Students felt that the Help Desk could be more prominent. Students seem unsure about the Help Desk's purpose and staffed hours.

#### Interlibrary Loan (ILL)

- Overall students had positive experiences with Interlibrary Loan.
- They did mention common issues such as short loan periods, or overly long waits were mentioned as drawbacks.
- Students desired to ILL newer books and movies.

#### Roving Reference

- Students had not received assistance from a Roving Reference peer but were very open to assistance from a trained peer.

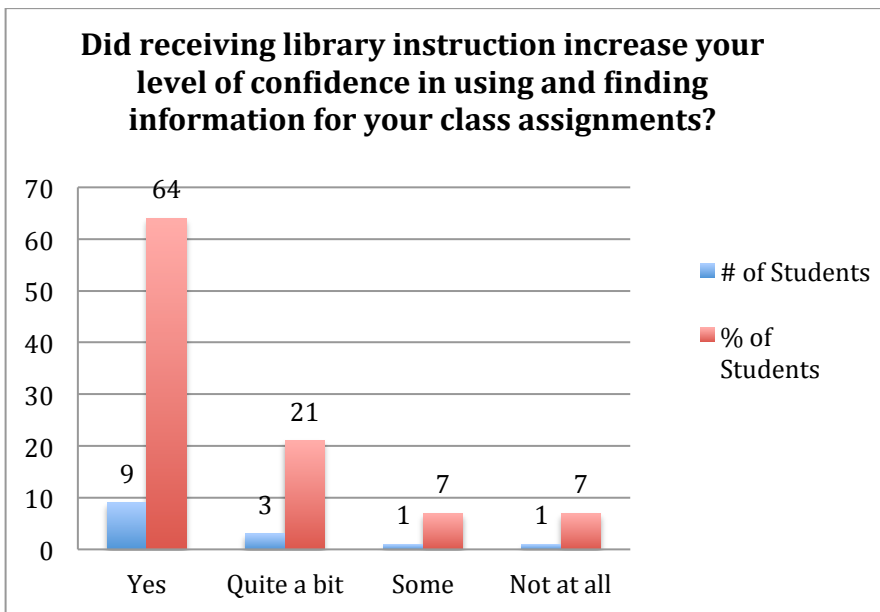
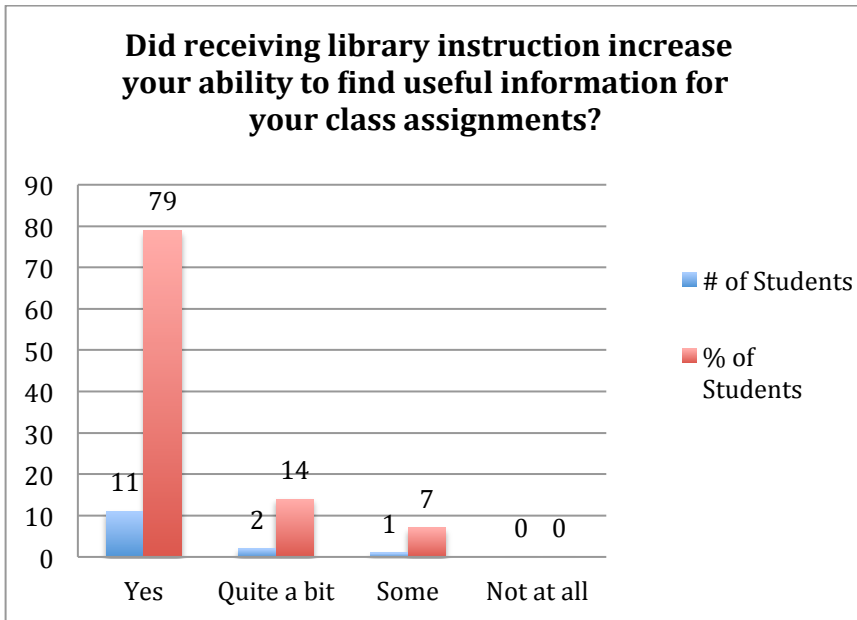
#### 24/7

- Students had limited experience with the 24/7 chat service.
- Of those using the service, their experiences were uneven ranging from very positive to negative.

#### Instruction

- In-person instruction was a preferred method for students learning about library research; however, a small group of students prefer online videos.
- Ninety-three percent of students receiving library instruction noted that it increased their ability to find useful information for their class assignment (*yes / quite a bit*).

- Eighty-five percent of students receiving library instruction noted that it increased their level of confidence (*yes / quite a bit*) in using and finding information for their class assignments.



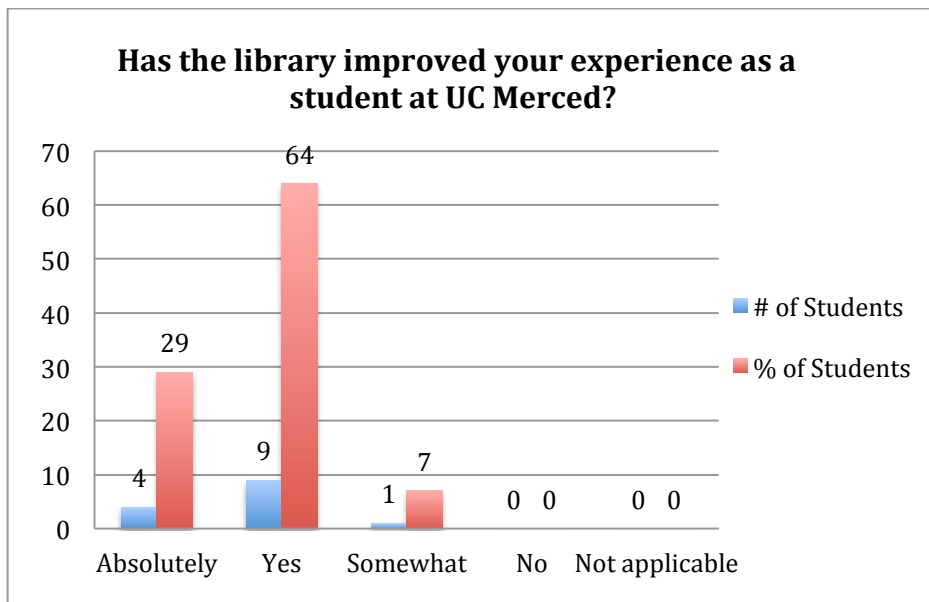
**Actions:**

- Consider checking out more Ethernet cables or communicating to students to bring Ethernet cables to the library.
- Continue conversations with campus IT for improvements to wireless capabilities in the building.

- Reinvigorate the Roving Reference service and provide training and especially focus on how students can actively offer assistance.
- Ensure student assistants are trained to provide consistent, friendly, and quality service to library users.
- Continue to offer both in-person library instruction and online tutorials for instructional purposes to meet user preferences for learning about the library.
- Continue to deliver accurate messages about Interlibrary Loan.
- Continue to add current books and films to the library's collection.
- Continue to monitor all 24/7 chat interactions initiated by UC Merced users in order to ensure their questions are answered.
- Note: Configuration changes to the Help Desk and printing areas are unlikely.

### Library Value

- The library did not play a role in these students' decision to attend UC Merced though for a couple students they considered it a highlight of the school.
- Students see the library as supporting their academics goals (getting good grades) and helping them understand how to do effective research.
- Students are motivated to use the library (e.g. find credible resources) ultimately to earn better grades.
- Overall, ninety-three percent of the participants responded that the library improved their experience as a student at UC Merced (*absolutely & yes*).



### Action:

- In future focus groups, continue to ask about the library's contributions to their university experience and academic success.

Facilitator: Sara Davidson Squibb  
Recorders: Tatsiana Verstak (SATAL), Cody Knopp Sargoni (SATAL),  
Linh Doan (Library), Elizabeth McMunn-Tetangco (Library),  
Initial Report: SATAL recorders & Adriana Signorini  
Current Report: Sara Davidson Squibb 6 June 2014